

Hi everyone,

We wanted to provide a brief update to you all on activities from the Otter Valley Association. This email contains the following items:

1. Please join us at our 45th Annual General Meeting.
2. Thank you for attending the OVA Summer Party.
3. We've added a new walk to the walks program.
4. OVA Initiative update: Water Quality up the river Otter.
5. OVA Initiative update: Blue plaques and the notables of the Otter valley.
6. Facebook, Web, Newsletters & Email updates.
7. East Budleigh Scarecrow festival.
8. Otterton Open Morning.
9. Volunteers needed – Events, Talks, History, Environment.

1. Please join our 45th Annual General Meeting

Our 45th AGM is taking place on the 11th June 2024 at the Peter Hall in Budleigh Salterton. Please join us to review our work, engage with our teams and listen to Sam Bridgewater talk about the work being done across Clinton Devon Estates and the Pebblebed Heaths team. Our agenda is:

AGENDA

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of the Previous AGM held on 12th June 2023
3. Matters Arising
4. The Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 March 24.
5. Appointment of the Independent Examiner
6. Election of Trustees as Officers
7. Election of other Trustees
8. Any Other Business
9. Proposed Date of next AGM - to be confirmed.

The draft Minutes of the AGM held on 12th June 2023 are available to view on the OVA website. The Trustees Annual Report and Accounts will be available on the OVA website prior to the meeting or on written request to the Secretary.

2. Thank you for attending the OVA summer party

We had a fabulous attendance of about 80 people at our OVA members party. People arrived around 19:00 and were welcomed with a drink and amazing canapes (thank you to Bob and Mandy). We were treated to a number of (very) brief presentations including:

- A welcome from our chairman Haylor Lass
- An update on our environment committee from Geoff Porter and Chris Hodgson
- Paul Kurowski shared an overview of the walks program
- Iain Ure talked about the environmental working parties – including Balsam bashing!
- Chris Boorman talked about our Facebook efforts – now at over 700 members!
- Haylor stepped in for Dee Woods to talk about the Built environment work.

People were also able to watch a rolling presentation of slides about our various initiatives, as well as an amazing selection of photographs from award winner naturalist David R. White.

Watch out for the next party invite – and please step forward if you would like to help arrange such events!

3. New walk added to the walks program

Our walks team have added a new walk in July to our program. Here are the details:

Date: EITHER Tuesday 23 OR Thursday 25 July 10.00 am– 5.7 miles
Walk Title: 'Woodbury Wander'

Meet:	Estuary View car park (OS115, SY 032 872) what3words ///approvals.humidity.crouches
Description:	A lovely walk, with shade from trees in case it is warm and sunny. Further details to follow. Lovely views from the car park so bring a picnic to enjoy after we have finished the walk.
Walk Leaders:	Paul and Fran Dike 07977 057546 / 01297 20695

In addition, the walks team have confirmed the "Otter and Coast Walk" as taking place on Wednesday 29th May. Full details are on the web and/or Facebook group.

4. Initiative Update: Water Quality on the River Otter

In our last newsletter, we published an article in collaboration with our partners at the River Otter Fisheries Association. We have been looking at ways of further testing the Otter through our Citizen Scientists, as well as looking at the issues highlighted and potential solutions. Watch out on Facebook and in our next newsletter for further articles on this subject.

5. Initiative Update: Blue Plaques and historical people of significance

Following the publication of our two articles in the last newsletter, we have now formed a "Blue Plaques group" to look at future blue plaque candidates. This group comprises Michael Downes (local historian), Trevor Waddington (Fairlynch Museum), Brian Carpenter (OVA), Dee Woods (OVA) and Sarah Coles (Budleigh Information Centre). The first meeting took place this week with a view to discussing the suggested criteria and processes for identifying, agreeing and communicating such notables. Please keep an eye on the OVA web – where we have added a section showing a map of the local area with all known existing blue plaques highlighted.

Do you know of anyone who could be a candidate?

If you know of any people that you think could warrant a blue plaque – please do get in touch with us (via Facebook, the web or by emailing info@ova.org.uk) or any of the group members above.

6. Facebook, Web, Newsletters & Email updates

As we evolve our charity, we continue to use different ways of sharing information. We encourage everyone to check out our various forums and engage – whether by liking something or adding your own article.

- **Printed Newsletters:** We continue to publish a printed newsletter to all OVA paid-up members. This is produced quarterly. Our next newsletter will be published at the end of July. We are always looking for new articles for future issues – please contact us for any ideas you may have.
- **Monthly email updates:** We will be sharing a monthly email update to all OVA members like this. If you would like anything included, then please contact the editor at info@ova.org.uk.
- **Website (www.ova.org.uk):** Our website is where all material is published by the OVA – including updated walks, talks, articles, newsletters, flyers and publications. Please note that the printed newsletter is not posted online until the following newsletter is distributed – ensuring that all members are able to read the printed copy first.
- **Facebook:** We are building a community on Facebook. Here members can post their own articles and photographs, as well as comments like and engage with others. This community has now grown to over 700 people from Exmouth to Sidmouth and from Exeter to Budleigh Salterton. We also have many people joining the Facebook group from all parts of the world – eager to see the photos and community updates from one of their favourite places.
- **WhatsApp:** The walks team use WhatsApp to share information with the walkers. If you are interested in joining this, please join one of the walks and talk to the relevant walk leader.

7. East Budleigh Scarecrow Festival

The fabulous East Budleigh scarecrow festival takes place on the weekend of 8th & 9th June from 11am to 4pm. An amazingly fun two days with scarecrows around the village, refreshments, stalls and entertainment around the village hall, church tower visits, displays, rock choirs and male voice choirs – it's all happening at East Budleigh. See you there!

8. Otterton Open Morning

The Otterton Parish Council are holding an Open morning on Saturday 1st June from 10am till noon at the Village Hall. A variety of clubs and associations are planning to attend. The OVA is also hoping to attend. See you there!

9. Volunteers needed

As with all charities, we survive and thrive on the funding and assistance provided by you – our members. We have several vacancies that we are looking to fill with volunteers. If you can spare an hour or two a week, or a month, or a year ... then please do get in touch. Any help is appreciated!

- History – we are looking for someone to help us manage OVAPedia – including researching, writing and uploading new articles.
- Water Quality initiative – we are looking for people to help who are interested in helping evolve the river Otter back to where it needs to be in terms of river quality.
- Talks – we are looking for someone to help us organise our talks schedule. This involves gathering ideas and then working with other committee members and presenters to communicate.
- Events – we are looking for someone to help us manage our upcoming events – such as the members party and talks program.

Please contact info@ova.org.uk if you have time to spare and help us.